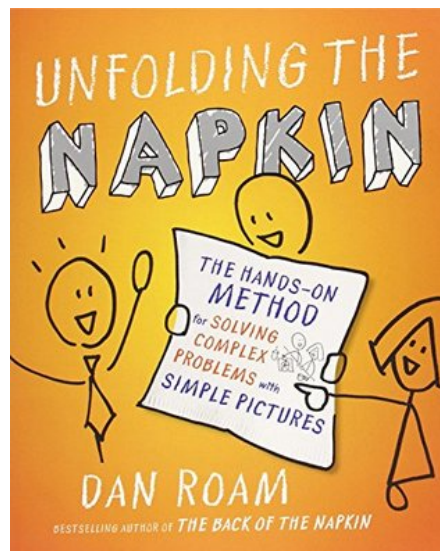




Unfolding the Napkin: The Hands-On Method for Solving Complex Problems with Simple Pictures

Dan Roam

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From Reader Review Unfolding the Napkin: The Hands-On Method for Solving Complex Problems with Simple Pictures for online ebook

Andrewziegler says

This book provides a simple approach to become a more effective communicator.

It was interesting to recognize tactics that were already being implemented at my office. (I am guessing someone from our corporate, if not our office leader, has read this.)

None the less, I found it a valuable read and already find myself using some of its methods.

Thai Duc says

Such an amazing book. It enlightens me with a new approach to the problem-solving skill. I immediately apply the tools to my writing skill, my daily job as a Software Architect. It helps me better explaining the boring topic or hard to understand. You know the software stuff are not that fun.

If you are struggling with understanding complex stuff, this book is for you. You will see things in totally different perspective.

Priya says

Break the problem into 50 visual pieces is a good way to see the problems from different points of view. Its an exercise worth doing when you are stuck on ideas. Another method to generate 5*5*2 possibilities .

Vandana says

Hi. So for all those out there who gaze at their laptops and computer screen for long number of hours each day, to figure out what those bulk charts, dashboards and tables say about your company profits and losses, this book is your knight in the shining armor! :) All post grads doing MBA, please go through this book and learn better visualization and presentation aspects for your projects and models. Ben Fry sure is the most renowned author for data visualization practices in the world but Dan Roam has done an amazing work with this second book of his. His style is frank, simple, approachable, funny and gripping! It almost feels like a fiction novel as you turn pages and glance at hi text and pictures. I would recommend this to corporate world and anybody who is into a lot of presentations and data interpretation.

Have a humorous and informative read! :)

Faz says

It's a 4-day workshop on how to make the steps your own. This one's for everyone who's ever been asked "Can you show me what it looks like?" I find the book especially helpful for presenting stuff in a brown bag lunch session and any other discussions over coffee & without a laptop computer, a white board or one of those blasted tablets.

Fernanda Kersman says

Ver, entender, contar y solucionar temas y problemas con una caja de herramientas tan sencilla como poderosa. #VisualThinking #VisualTelling #Storytelling

Nora says

The author spends the first 100 pages expaining why pictures are a good idea. He could have made his point much quicker and spent more time explaining his frameworks for drawing pictures, of which there are very many. He makes an analogy with a swiss army knife: his has 18 tools on it, culminating in a $6 \times 5 \times 2 = 60$ -picture grid of the different drawings you can make, which he calls the "visual thinking codex". The types of pictures he is talking about are: who/what, how much, where, when, how and why for the 6, and simple/elaborate, quality/quantity, vision/execution, individual/comparison and change/as-is for the 5x2.

On a side note, the book contains a "how to lie with statistics" error on pages 92-103, where he uses the area of an equilateral triangle to represent size. The area does not scale linearly with the sides, so a triangle that should be twice as large is now four times as large. He might have scaled the triangles to fit, but neither the sides nor the areas of the triangles scale with the numbers he's representing. Here's where I would keep it simple (and correct!) and go with bar charts.

Eric Wallace says

I picked up this book--and in particular the "hands-on" workbook instead of the original The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures--because I am not particularly visual person, but I want to learn to communicate better visually and practice it, too. As such, I found the book quite helpful, but it took me *forever* to get through because, well, it was like "work". (This is quite ironic since I regularly read technical books that are very much related to my job and frequently pertinent to a project I am working on, but I don't find most of them to be "work".) But I can't complain because the author does a fine job of helping the reader think through problems by describing their features in a visual manner.

Aaron Bolin says

Dan Roam is really cool; I really enjoyed this book. Yes, the pictures are kind of corny. Yes, the examples are kind of cartoonish. Yes, the exercises seem like they are from kindergarten. But somehow Roam has

taken corny, cartoonish, kindergarten tasks and turned them into something really useful.

I read this book and enjoyed it, but I didn't get the full value of the content until I went back and worked the exercises. Though I don't remember what SQVID stands for or any of the other organizing schemes that Roam uses, I really did learn something from his very original presentation of simple visual thinking tools. In the process of working through the exercises in the book, I distilled the complexities of my work into four intuitive pictographs. My boss at the time hated these pictographs for some reason, but the value of the pictographs was demonstrated conclusively a few weeks later. I was presenting an overview of our processes and methods to a group of visitors from Turkey. Although they all spoke English as a second language, all of the text-based materials fell flat. The lightbulbs of understanding lit up all around the room when the discussion turned to those four silly pictographs though.

Unfolding the Napkin is a quick, fun, and useful read.

Jules says

I found the first half of the book more helpful and easier to follow than the second half, but I still think this is more useful for how you communicate visually than how you actually do the solving -- my brain did not understand a lot of this naturally. (Red pen!) Still, it helped me get out of my comfort zone by exploring some different ways to show rather than tell concepts I'm trying to convey.

Dawid Naude says

Loved it! Highly recommend it for anyone who is tired of boring Powerpoints, or consultants who want to understand complex concepts and requirements with a simple model.

Also- it will give you a tool to present to any group and ensure they GET what you're saying. Loved it, excited to implement this every day.

Stephen says

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Excellent approach to visual thinking and visual problem solving. This book is a follow-up to the original book and is set up as more of a workbook.

Best ideas are the four "unwritten rules" including: (a) whoever is best able to describe the problem is the person most likely to solve it, (b) we can't solve problems that overwhelm us. To understand what we're seeing, we need to break it into bite-size pieces, (c) problems don't get solved by the smartest, fastest, or strongest; they get solved by the one who sees the possibilities; and (d) the more human your picture, the more human the response.

Richard Stephenson says

I thought it was amazing!

I didn't read his first book about napkin creativity. However, this book was so totally up my alley. I soak in TONS of information and absolutely loved this method of getting down on paper. It's quick, it's not perfect, and it leaves a lot out... but that's what it's for!

And here's another huge thing... the more tools you learn to help you CONSCIOUSLY control which "frame of mind" your in... the better! This is a HUGE skill that all must possess.

Recommended.

Drew Graham says

Any problem can be solved with simple illustrations, no matter your level of artistic ability (or lack thereof), and this book explains how with real-world applications and plenty of exercises.

Dan Roam apparently has taken his philosophies on the road with great results, revolutionizing how businesses relate sometimes complex ideas in very simple ways, while at the same time using basic and timeless methods. This is a handbook, like a do-it-yourself workshop, that takes you through the four days of his presentation, including examples and outlining his methods and philosophies, as well as exercises to help illustrate and cement what you learn along the way. I thought this book was even more valuable than The Back of the Napkin: Solving Problems and Selling Ideas with Pictures, if only because it was briefer in text and denser in exercise. It was helpful to have read (or to read alongside) his first book, but to actually have the chance to put these things into use and practice them right then and there, and see how he would do them too, was pretty interesting and insightful. I tried to keep my drawings pretty rudimentary so I wouldn't be distracted by trying to make them look too beautiful and therefore not as spontaneous and inspired (which is exactly the point of his process -- rough drawings that very quickly illustrate something that might otherwise be complex and forgettable), and it was a really useful exercise. My office team worked through this workshop together and were all able to learn a lot of different things based on their respective background, perspective and actual work.

Dan Roam's Back of the Napkin process is put to the test here as a four-day workshop that you can do right at home with this companion book. He includes the basic information from his draw-to-teach philosophy, exercises to demonstrate and cement what he teaches, and even some examples to get you started and to compare to your own results. I liked how he kept the text to a minimum and just the relevant stuff, and I enjoyed going back to basics and trying to visually think like other people might. I tried to keep things basic and I think it was a really useful little series of exercises, whatever your work might be.

Rhica says

I hated this book. I retained nothing from reading. It was not engaging to me. If it weren't for class, I'd not've touched it.
